

CROWN JEWELS COMMISSION (IRELAND).

REPORT

OF THE

VICEREGAL COMMISSION

APPOINTED TO INVESTIGATE THE CIRCUMSTANCES
OF THE LOSS OF THE

REGALIA OF THE ORDER OF SAINT PATRICK,

AND TO INQUIRE WHETHER SIR ARTHUR WILKS EXERCISED DUE VIGILANCE
AND PROPER CARE AS THE CUSTODIAN THEREOF.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.



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WARRANT APPOINTING THE COMMISSION.

By the Lord Lieutenant-General and General Governor of Ireland.

ABERDEEN—

Whereas We have deemed it expedient that a Commission should issue forthwith to investigate the circumstances of the loss of the Regalia of the Order of Saint Patrick and to inquire whether Sir Arthur Vicars exercised due vigilance and proper care as the custodian thereof.

Now We, John Campbell, Earl of Aberdeen, Lord Lieutenant-General and General Governor of Ireland, nominate, constitute and appoint you, His Honor James Johnston Shaw, Robert Fitzwilliam Starkie, Esquire, and Chester Jones, Esquire, to be Commissioners for the purposes of the said Inquiry :

We do by these presents authorise and empower you to inquire of and concerning the premises, and to examine witnesses, and call for and examine all such books and documents as you shall judge likely to afford you the fullest information, and to report to Us what you shall find touching and concerning the premises.

Given at His Majesty's Castle in Dublin, this 6th day
of January, 1908.

By His Excellency's Command.

J. B. DOUGHERTY.

REPORT.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE LORD LIEUTENANT-GENERAL AND
GENERAL GOVERNOR OF IRELAND.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

We, the undersigned, were, by Your Excellency's Warrant bearing date the 6th day of January, 1908, appointed Commissioners to inquire into and report upon "the circumstances of the loss of the Regalia of the Order of "St. Patrick and to inquire whether Sir Arthur Vicars exercised due vigilance and proper care as the custodian thereof."

And we now beg to report to Your Excellency as follows:—

1. We held our first meeting on the 10th January, 1908, at the Office of Arms, Dublin Castle. The Right Hon. J. H. Campbell, K.C., M.P., and Mr. Timothy M. Healy, K.C., M.P. (instructed by Messrs. W. B. Meredith and Son, Solicitors), appeared as Counsel on behalf of Sir Arthur Vicars; the Solicitor-General for Ireland, Mr. Redmond Barry, K.C., M.P. (instructed by Mr. Malachi Kelly, Chief Crown Solicitor), appeared on behalf of the Government.

2. At the outset of our proceedings Mr. J. H. Campbell, as counsel for Sir Arthur Vicars, asked us whether the Inquiry was to be public or private. We informed him that we were prepared to hear any application he had to make on that point, and to consider it carefully. He then proceeded to apply that the Inquiry might be held in public. As most of his arguments were based upon the terms of the reference in Your Excellency's Warrant, and upon the absence of any power in your Commissioners to compel the attendance of witnesses or to examine them upon oath, we pointed out that these objections applied to any Inquiry at all under Your Excellency's Warrant, whether public or private. Mr. Campbell then declared that under no circumstances could Sir Arthur Vicars or his counsel take any part in an Inquiry held under Your Excellency's Warrant, and withdrew his application for a public Inquiry. Sir Arthur Vicars and his counsel then withdrew, and we have had no assistance from them in our Inquiry. We had the advantage, however, of the written statements made by Sir Arthur Vicars to the police and of the oral statements made by him at various times to the police and other witnesses examined before us.

3. On the withdrawal of Sir Arthur Vicars we adjourned till the next morning, in order that we might consider, and give the Government time to consider, the situation that had thus arisen. We were disposed to think that no useful purpose could be served by the prosecution of the Inquiry after the withdrawal of Sir Arthur Vicars, who, as the responsible custodian of the Jewels, was the person mainly interested in the result of the Inquiry; and in view of the fact that the Government were probably already in possession of all the information which our Inquiry was likely, under the circumstances, to elicit. But when the Solicitor-General, on behalf of the Government, asked us to hear the evidence relevant to our Inquiry which he was in a position to offer, and assured us he was in possession of important evidence on both branches of our Inquiry, we felt that we could not refuse to receive and record the evidence thus tendered, and that we must leave the responsibility for any deficiencies in the evidence before us on those who refused to take part in our proceedings.

4. We took evidence on five days, January 11th, 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th, and during that time there were examined before us every person employed in the Office of Arms during the year 1907, except Sir Arthur Vicars himself; Mr. Horlock, his Clerk; and Miss Gibben, the Typist. We sat in the Library of the Office of Arms where the safe containing the lost jewels stood at the time of the robbery, and we had a full opportunity of inspecting, on the spot, all the arrangements of the Office. We also examined every Police Officer who had been engaged in the investigation of the circumstances attending the robbery, and certain experts in the construction and use of safes and safe-locks, who gave us valuable information. We have thus been able to ascertain every material circumstance connected with the loss of the Crown Jewels, and we propose to give Your Excellency, in the first place, a short statement of the facts which appear to us to be the most important in relation to the subject of our Inquiry.

5. Sir Arthur Vicars was appointed Ulster King of Arms in February, 1903. At that time the Office of Arms was in the Birmingham Tower, but in 1903 it was removed to the building now occupied in the Upper Castle Yard. The duties of Ulster King of Arms in relation to the custody of the Crown Jewels and of the other Insignia of the Order of St. Patrick are defined in the revised statutes of the Order, dated 29th July, 1905. By Statute 27, Ulster King of Arms "shall have the custody of the jewelled Insignia of the Grand Master." By Statute 12, "the jewelled Insignia of the Grand Master . . . which are Crown Jewels . . . shall be deposited by our Ulster King of Arms in the Chancery of the Order, along with the other Insignia of the Order." By Statute 37 of the Chancery of the Order "shall be in the Office of Arms in Our Castle of Dublin." And by Statute 20 it is ordained that the Collars and Badges of the Knights Companions of the Order which are in the custody of Ulster King of Arms, "shall be deposited for safe keeping in a steel safe in the Strong Room in the Chancery of the Order in the Office of Arms in Ireland." (The particular Statutes here quoted are set out in Appendix B.)

6. At the fitting up of the new Office of Arms in 1903 a Strong Room was built by the Board of Works according to plans approved by Sir Arthur Vicars. Sir George Holmes, the Chairman of the Board of Works, informed us that, at the time the plans for this Strong Room were prepared, he was not told by Sir Arthur Vicars, nor did he know, that the safe in which the Crown Jewels and other Insignia were kept, was to be placed in the Strong Room. After the Strong Room was completed it was found that the safe could not be got in by the door. When Sir George Holmes' attention was called to this, he offered to place the safe in the Strong Room either by breaking down part of the wall and re-building it or by temporarily removing the iron bars of the window. Sir Arthur Vicars did not accept this offer on the ground that the safe would occupy too much floor space in the Strong Room, and said that unless he got a smaller safe he would prefer it to remain outside. It was ultimately arranged that the safe should remain in the Library until it was wanted for some other office, when Sir George Holmes promised to provide a new safe which could be placed in the Strong Room. According to the evidence of Sir George Holmes this arrangement was acquiesced in by Sir Arthur Vicars, and so matters remained down to the date of the disappearance of the Jewels. Sir George Holmes told us that his attention was never called by Sir Arthur Vicars, or anybody else, after July, 1905, to the requirements of Statutes 12 and 20, that the Crown Jewels and other Insignia of the Order of St. Patrick "shall be deposited for safe keeping in a steel safe in the Strong Room." It is certain that this requirement of the Statutes was never complied with and that from the date of entering upon the new office in 1903 until the date of the disappearance of the Jewels, the safe was kept, not in the Strong Room, but in the Library.

7. The Office of Arms is entered by an outer door opening into the Upper Castle Yard. There are two locks on that door, a latch opened by a latch-key, and a large stock-lock with a key hole both inside and outside. The

stock or main lock was never locked by day or night. The door was shut at night and on Sundays and holidays by slipping the bolt of the latch, so that any person having a latch-key could enter at any time of the day or night when the Office was closed. When the latch was unlocked the door was opened by turning a handle. There was no bell on the door to indicate when it was being opened or shut. There were at least seven latch-keys for this door outstanding. Sir Arthur Vicars, Mr. Birtchall, Secretary, Mr. P. G. Mahony, Cork Herald, William Stivey, the messenger, Mrs. Farrell, the office cleaner, Detective Kerr, and John O'Keeffe, a servant of the Board of Works, each had a latch-key. It was necessary that Mrs. Farrell, Stivey, Detective Kerr, and O'Keeffe (who lit and extinguished the light in the Clock Tower during the Castle season) should have access to the Office at times when it was closed, and perhaps no better arrangement could conveniently have been made. But it is obvious that the fact that the Office was so easily accessible at all hours and that seven latch-keys were given out, some of them in the hands of persons of humble station, made it additionally necessary that special provision should be made for the safe keeping of the Crown Jewels. During the day this outer door could be opened by anybody merely by turning the handle. There was no one on the ground floor but the messenger Stivey, whose usual seat did not command a view of the door. The Library, in which the safe containing the Crown Jewels was kept, is not an ordinary working-room and is not occupied, except temporarily, by any of the officials. One door of the Library is quite close to the outer door, and is so situated that any person might quietly open the outer door and enter the Library without attracting attention. A second door of the Library opened into the Messenger's Room and was usually left open. The Library was the Waiting-room of the Office, and every person who called on a matter of business or curiosity was shown in there until some of the officials came down from the first floor to attend to him. The Office of Arms, in common with all the other offices in Dublin Castle, was visited and inspected every evening, after all the officials had left, by a member of the detective force, whose duty it was to see that the offices were safe, but who had no special duty in connection with the custody of the Crown Jewels.

8. The Strong Room is practically an off-shoot from the Messenger's Room in which Stivey sat when on duty except when he was sent on a message, or was at dinner, or was called upstairs. There were four keys for the outer door of this Strong Room. One was in possession of Sir Arthur Vicars, Stivey held one, Mr. P. G. Mahony one, and one, which had for a short time been in possession of Mr. Birtchall, was, at the date of the disappearance of the Jewels, in the Strong Room in a drawer stated to be unlocked. Close inside the outer door of the Strong Room is a strong steel grille which must be opened before access can be had to the Strong Room. One key of this grille, which was in Stivey's charge, was constantly in the lock whether the Strong Room was open or shut, except when Stivey went on a message or was at dinner, when he locked the grille and placed the key of the grille in an unlocked drawer in his room, leaving the outer door of the Strong Room open. This latter arrangement was made by Sir Arthur Vicars' order. Every official in the office knew where the key of the grille was kept in Stivey's absence, and had access to it. It was the custom for Stivey to open the Strong Room every morning when he came on duty, and to leave both the outer door and the grille open until he left in the evening, except upon occasions of his temporary absence, when he made the arrangements which we have already described. If he were merely called upstairs and there was no stranger about, he left both the outer door and the grille open. This Strong Room ought to have contained the safe in which the Crown Jewels and other Insignia were kept, but it did, as a matter of fact, contain articles of very great value, including three gold collars and badges of Knights Companions of the Order, two State Maces, the Sword of State, a jewelled Sceptre, a Crown, and two massive Silver Spurs. These were exposed in a glass case. There was another gold collar in a case somewhere else in the Strong Room (see *Sir Arthur Vicars' written statement to the Police, July 12th, 1907, Appendix A.*). It is plainly contrary to Statute 20 of the Order that these Collars and Badges of the

Knights Companions should be kept exposed in a glass-case in the Strong Room. The words of the Statute are express—"in a steel safe in the Strong Room."

9. We have thus given a general description of the way in which the Office of Arms was kept, and of the provision made for the safe keeping of the Crown Jewels and other Insignia of the Order of St. Patrick. We have stated no facts but those which are common to all the witnesses, and which are admitted by Sir Arthur Vicars himself in his statements to the police. Looking at these facts alone, and without any reference to the loss of the Crown Jewels or the incidents that accompanied that loss, we cannot arrive at the conclusion that Sir Arthur Vicars exercised due vigilance and proper care in the custody of the Jewels. We do not dwell upon the positive breach of his duty under Statutes 12 and 20 of the Order. But, apart from any specific duty imposed upon him by the Statutes, we cannot think that he showed proper care in leaving the safe containing the Crown Jewels in a room which was open to the public all day, and was open all night to any person who either possessed, or could get possession of one of seven latch-keys. We should have thought that in the case of Jewels like these, of immense value and of national importance, the responsible custodian would, instead of carrying about the key of the safe in his pocket, have deposited it with his banker or in some other place of security except on the rare occasions when it was necessarily in use. We are of opinion that great want of proper care was also shown in respect of the Strong Room. The fact that three, and at one time four, keys of this room were out in the hands of different persons, one of whom was Stivey, the messenger, who also had control of a key of the grille, is in itself a proof of want of due care. We have been unable to ascertain any sufficient reason why a key of this Strong Room should have been in any hands but Sir Arthur Vicars' own. The further fact that it was the custom that William Stivey the messenger should open both doors of the Strong Room on his arrival in the morning and that they should be kept open all day until Stivey left in the evening, also appears to us to show great want of care.

10. We now come to the circumstances connected with the loss of the Jewels and with the discovery of their loss. It is ascertained beyond doubt that the Jewels were in the safe on June 11th, 1907. They were shown on that date by Sir Arthur Vicars to Mr. John Crawford Hodgson, Librarian to the Duke of Northumberland. There is no evidence that from that date until the 6th of July, when their loss was discovered, they were seen by anybody, nor is there any evidence that the safe was ever opened by anyone in the Office between those dates. Sir Arthur Vicars himself says, in the statement already quoted:—"From 11th June to 6th July I have no recollection of seeing the Jewels nor of having gone to the safe." The officials attending in the Office between those dates were Sir Arthur Vicars, Mr. Birtchall, Mr. Mahony, Mr. Horlock, Miss Gibbon, Stivey the messenger, and Mrs. Farrell the office cleaner. Neither Mr. Goldney, Athlone Pursuivant, nor Mr. Shackleton, Dublin Herald, appears to have been in the Office, or indeed in Ireland, at any time between those dates. Mr. Mahony was not in the Office from April until July 4th, except on one day in May, so that, of the period between 11th June and 6th July, he was only in the Office on three days.

11. On the morning of Wednesday, 3rd July, Mrs. Farrell, the office cleaner, on coming to the office at her usual hour between 7 and 8 o'clock, found that the outer door was unlocked. The bolt of the latch was caught back, so that she opened the door by merely turning the handle. Mrs. Farrell waited until Stivey, the messenger, came in about 10, and told him what had happened. When Sir Arthur Vicars arrived about 12, Stivey told him what Mrs. Farrell had reported, and Sir Arthur replied "Is that so?" or "Did she?" No further notice was taken of this incident. It was not reported to the police, nor was Kerr, the detective, whose duty it was to inspect the offices at night, informed of the circumstance. Stivey is perfectly certain that he slipped the bolt of the latch when leaving the office about

5.30 on the Tuesday evening, but he is not certain whether he left Sir Arthur Vicars behind him or not. Detective Kerr visited the office about 7 p.m. on the Tuesday evening, opened the door by his latch-key, found it locked, found no one in the office, made his usual round of inspection, tried the door as he went out, and made sure it was locked. It is plain upon this evidence that some one in possession of a latch-key visited the Office after Detective Kerr had left it, and took the trouble to draw back the bolt of the latch and fasten it. It seems to us an extraordinary instance of negligence on Sir Arthur Vicars' part that he made no enquiry about this singular incident, did not interrogate Kerr the detective, made no report to the police, and did not examine the safe or Strong Room to see that that all was right. Sir Arthur Vicars' own account of this matter is as follows:—"On Wednesday, 3rd July, to the best of my recollection, I arrived at the Office at 12 o'clock, noon, and left about 6 p.m. Stivey informed me that he was told by Mrs. Farrell, the office cleaner, that she found the hall door open when she arrived to clean the office in the morning." (*Sir Arthur Vicars' Statement of 12th July, 1907—Appendix A*).

12. On the morning of Saturday, 6th July, a still more startling incident occurred. Mrs. Farrell opened the office at her usual hour between 7 and 8 a.m. and walked into the messenger's room to see if any written message had been left for her. On entering the messenger's room she found that the outer door of the Strong Room was standing ajar. There were two keys hanging in the lock of the grille. Mrs. Farrell took these two keys out of the grille-lock, and shut the outer door of the Strong Room. She did not wait until Stivey came, either because he was late or because she was in a hurry, but she wrote a note on his blotting-pad telling him what she had found, and left the keys on the note. When Stivey came about 10.20 a.m., he found Mrs. Farrell's note and the two keys lying beside it. These two keys, as he explained to us, were the key of the grille and a smaller key which opened the presses in the Library, and they were tied together by a piece of twine. The presence of the keys was indubitable evidence that the Strong Room door had been opened or had been left open, as the keys were left in the lock of the grille the night before. Stivey at once examined the Strong Room, and found that nothing had been touched inside, so far as he could observe. On the preceding evening Stivey had gone to Sir Arthur Vicars' room about 5.30 p.m., and found him there with Mr. Horlock. He asked Sir Arthur if he might go, and was told he might. He asked Sir Arthur if he wanted the Strong Room any more that night. Sir Arthur said "No, you may close it." Stivey then closed and locked the outer door of the Strong Room, leaving the two keys hanging in the lock of the grille. Stivey's statement is fully confirmed by Sir Arthur Vicars, who says:—"On Friday, 5th July, I left the office at 7.15 p.m. About 5.45 p.m. Stivey asked me whether he could go, and I said "Yes." He asked me whether he should lock the Strong Room, and I told him "to do so, at the same time handing him a M.S. to be replaced therein. I subsequently had occasion to pass the Strong Room door to go to the telephone more than once, and the door was closed." (*Statement of 12th July, 1907—Appendix A*.) About 7.15 p.m. Sir Arthur Vicars left his office with Mr. Horlock. Before he left he made what he called his "usual tour of inspection." "I passed through the Library, glancing at all the book-cases, and satisfied myself they were closed. I passed into the messenger's room, noticed the window was bolted, and tried the handle of the Strong Room door and found the door was locked." (*Same Statement, Appendix*.) Almost immediately after Sir Arthur Vicars had left the office Detective Kerr entered it, and examined every room in the house. He noticed the Strong Room door; it was closed and bolted. He left the office about 7.30 p.m. On these facts it was plain that someone had entered the office after the Detective had left on Friday evening, and had opened the Strong Room and left it open. It seems very strange that, after what had happened on the preceding Wednesday morning, Sir Arthur Vicars should treat this new incident as if it were of no importance whatever. When he was told by Stivey that Mrs. Farrell had found the Strong Room open when she came in the morning, he said, "Did she?" or "Is that so?" went upstairs to his own room, and took no further notice of the incident. He did not even examine the

Strong Room to see if anything had been taken, he did not examine the safe to see if it had been tampered with, he did not send for Detective Kerr to see if he had noticed anything wrong the night before, he made no communication to the Police, Sir Arthur Vicars has given his own explanation of his conduct on this occasion, and it seems to us wholly insufficient:—"On Saturday, 6th July, I arrived at the office at about 11 a.m. I have a vague recollection of being told by Stivey that Mrs. Farrell had found the Strong Room door open when she arrived, but at the time I did not realise that it was that morning, and being very busy left the matter for subsequent investigation. It was not until Sunday afternoon, when I was working at my house in connection with the Royal Visit with Horlock, that I realised that the Strong Room door was open on Saturday morning. Horlock had informed me at my house on Sunday that Stivey had told me in my office on Saturday that the Strong Room door was found open that morning." (*Sir Arthur Vicars' Statement of 12th July—Appendix A*). It is hardly necessary to comment upon the strange want of any sense of responsibility for the security of his office and of the Jewels entrusted to his care which this statement reveals. The door of his office had been found open on the previous Wednesday; he is now told that the door of the Strong Room had been found open; he has only a vague recollection of this startling statement; he does not take the trouble to ascertain definitely even the day on which the event had happened; and he thinks it a matter that may be left for subsequent investigation. We can only say that, in our opinion, Sir Arthur Vicars' treatment of this incident shows an entire absence of vigilance and care in the custody of the Jewels.

13. It was between 12.30 and 1 p.m. on Saturday, 6th July, that Stivey told Sir Arthur Vicars about the Strong Room having been found open. About 2.15 p.m. on the same day Stivey went to Sir Arthur Vicars' room to inquire whether he might go for the day. Sir Arthur gave him the key of the safe, and the box containing the collar of a deceased Knight of St. Patrick which had just been returned, and told them to open the safe and place the collar in it. This was the first time that Stivey ever had the key of the safe in his hand. It seems strange that Stivey should at any time have been entrusted with the key of the safe, but that he should have been entrusted with it just after the occurrence of incidents which called for peculiar care seems stranger still. Stivey proceeded to the safe and tried to open it. He found, in the way which is fully described in his evidence, that the safe was actually unlocked. He did not open the safe. Sir Arthur Vicars came down stairs immediately, and Stivey told him the safe was not locked. Sir Arthur thereupon opened the safe, and found that the Jewels and all the Collars and Badges in the safe were gone. The cases which had contained the Jewels, Collars, and Badges had all been carefully replaced, but a case containing his mother's diamonds, which was locked and the key of which was in the hands of Mr. George Mahony, his half-brother, had been removed. The police were then sent for and told what had happened, and even then not a word was said about the Strong Room having been found open that very morning. When Superintendent Lowe said, "What about the Strong Room?" Sir Arthur replied, "It is a modern safe, a Milner's safe, and quite secure; it could not be opened except by its own key." Nobody on Saturday, the 6th, mentioned to the police either that the outer door had been found open on the morning of Wednesday, or that the Strong Room had been found open on that morning (Saturday), and it was only on Sunday, the 7th, that Detective Kerr heard these facts from Mrs. Farrell for the first time.

14. The lock of the Strong Room was carefully examined on Monday, 8th July, by Mr. F. J. O'Hare, a Dublin representative of the Milner Safe Company, who supplied the door and lock of the Strong Room. He took the lock to pieces and took out the seven levers. He found no trace whatever of tampering with the lock. There was not a scratch on the highly polished levers. The Rainer safe, in which the Jewels were kept, was examined on the 9th July by Cornelius Gallagher, an employé of Rainer's agents in Dublin. He removed the lock and chamber, took all the levers out, and found no trace of tampering or any scratch on the levers. Both these experts came to the

same conclusion; that there was no picking of the locks, or attempt at picking; that the locks were opened by their own keys or keys identical with them in every respect in make and finish, and that such keys could not be fabricated from a wax impression. Keys fabricated from a wax impression, though they would have opened the locks, would, in their opinion, have left on the levers traces of pressure and friction which would be easy discernible.

15. If the person who stole the Jewels was, as we believe he was, the same person who entered the Office of Arms on the night of Tuesday, 2nd July, and again on the night of Friday, 5th July, it is clear that he possessed three keys—a latch-key for the outer door, a key of the Strong Room, and a key of the safe. As there were at least seven latch-keys outstanding and carried about in the pockets of the persons who used them there could be no great difficulty in obtaining possession of a latch-key. Sir Arthur Vicars told Sergeant Sheehan on the 30th September that his own latch-key had been lost on the previous 28th June, and that he did not recover it until the 9th or 10th July, when it was found on his dressing-table. It is evident that this latch-key of Sir Arthur Vicars', in whatever hands it was, might have been used to open the door at any time between the 28th June and the 9th July. There were four keys of the Strong Room. One of these, which had for a short time been in possession of Mr. Burtchaeff, was at the date of the disappearance of the Jewels and for a year before, kept concealed in the Strong Room. There was no evidence that this key had ever been removed from the Strong Room until after the discovery of the loss of the Jewels. Another key of the Strong Room was in possession of Mr. P. G. Mahony, Cork Herald. Stivey seemed to be under the impression that Mr. Mahony's key was in the Strong Room with Mr. Burtchaeff's, but we are satisfied, on Mr. Mahony's own evidence, that his key was locked up in a desk in his own house from some day in April, 1907, when he left Dublin on account of his health, until the evening of Saturday, 6th July, when he delivered up this key to Sir Arthur Vicars, and that it had not been once out of his desk during that interval. There remain only Stivey's key and that held by Sir Arthur Vicars himself. We are of opinion that the Strong Room must have been opened on the night of Friday, 5th July, by one or other of these keys, or else by a key fabricated by a skilled workman from one of the keys of the Strong Room as a model. There was no evidence that any of these keys was ever out of its holder's possession long enough to enable a false key to be made, and we had evidence from the Police that an exhaustive inquiry had been made amongst all the locksmiths and key manufacturers in Dublin, and no such key had been made by any of them. We are also of opinion, with Inspector Kane, of Scotland Yard, that it is difficult to believe that any thief would have taken the trouble and risk of getting a false key of the Strong Room fabricated, except for the purpose of removing the valuables from the glass case therein. The person who opened the Strong Room on the night of Friday, 5th July, touched nothing in it.

16. We cannot attribute negligence to Sir Arthur Vicars in the custody of his key of the Strong Room. He seems to have taken as much care of it as any man could do of a key which he carried about with him, and which was in constant use. We have already expressed an opinion that it was an imprudent thing to give a key of the Strong Room to a man in Stivey's position, though we are fully convinced of Stivey's profligacy. Stivey himself says that he knew of no reason for his having this key except that Sir Arthur Vicars wanted him to carry a key.

17. There were only two keys of the safe, both in the possession of Sir Arthur Vicars. We are of opinion, upon the evidence, that the safe could only have been opened by one of these two keys, or by a key made by a skilled workman from one of these keys as a model. The following is Sir Arthur Vicars' own account of the way in which the two keys were kept:—"So far as I know there are only two keys for the safe which 'are always in my custody. . . . The key of the safe which I use I always 'carry with me along with other keys on a steel ring, except on full dress 'nights when I remove it from the hunch and carry it on a ring of its own 'in my uniform coat pocket; the other key for the safe I have always kept

"concealed in my residence. . . . I recollect leaving the key of the safe in my writing table at my residence about two months ago, but the keys, with safe key included, were brought to me to my office by my servant, Frederick Pitt, within an hour. The keys were found by my maid-servant in my writing desk, and she directed Pitt to bring them to the Castle to me." (*Statement of 12th July, 1907—Appendix A.*)—A further statement was made by Sir Arthur Vickers about the second key of the safe to Mr. Harrel, Assistant Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, on the afternoon of Saturday, 6th July, the day on which the loss of the jewels was discovered:—"He told me he had a second key for the safe, and that that key was in a drawer in a writing table in his own house. I said to him, 'Would you go and see whether that key is now there?' He said he had so much to do that he could not go then, but would go at the earliest moment possible—about 7 o'clock. I asked him to let me know at once when he went home whether the key was there, and he said he would. And he telephoned to me that evening that the key was there just as he had left it, and that he could see no trace of it having been tampered with."

18. We cannot acquit Sir Arthur Vickers of want of proper care in the custody of the keys of the safe. These keys unlocked the safe which contained Jewels of enormous value and importance, for whose safety Sir Arthur Vickers was wholly responsible. The safe was placed in a room which was easily accessible by day to everybody, and by night to anybody who could get possession of a latch-key. The position and value of these Jewels must have been known to very many people, as Sir Arthur Vickers was in the habit of showing them freely to casual visitors in the Library, where people were passing in and out. It was not necessary to open the safe except upon very rare occasions. Sir Arthur Vickers himself says—"I seldom have occasion to open it." (*Statement of 12th July, 1907—Appendix A.*) It appears on his own statement that he did not open the safe between 11th June and 6th July of 1907. Under these circumstances it appears to us that Sir Arthur Vickers ought not to have carried about a key of the safe or left one in his own house. He ought to have deposited the two keys of the safe in a strong room at his Bankers or in some other place of equal security, and only taken out one when it was necessary to open the safe, and returned it again to its place of security as soon as the occasion for using it was over.

19. We have thus given Your Excellency a statement of all the essential facts and circumstances connected with the loss of the Crown Jewels and of the conclusions we have drawn from them as to the vigilance and care exercised by Sir Arthur Vickers in their custody. Your Excellency will observe that the main facts on which we base any conclusion affecting Sir Arthur Vickers are not in controversy. There has been no conflict of evidence as to these facts before us, and there is nothing to contradict them in the various statements made by Sir Arthur Vickers himself to the Police.

20. We are very sorry that Sir Arthur Vickers did not appear before us to give evidence or to assist us, through his Counsel, in the examination or cross-examination of other witnesses. We think the reasons assigned for his refusal to assist us are wholly insufficient. Objection was at first taken to our Inquiry being held in private. We were ready to hear an application for a Public Inquiry and to grant it, if good reason had been shown for it, but as soon as we intimated our readiness to hear such an application it was withdrawn, and the objection to our Commission based on other and wholly different grounds. Objection was taken to the terms of the reference, though we think that the terms of the reference were wide enough to embrace every matter in relation to the loss of the Crown Jewels in which Sir Arthur Vickers' conduct as their custodian was involved. Objection was taken to the powers of the Commission, although we possessed every power which any Royal or Viceregal Commission can possess without a special Act of Parliament. The absence of power to compel the attendance of witnesses was made a matter of objection by Sir Arthur Vickers and his counsel; but the only witnesses asked by us to attend who refused to come,

in addition to Sir Arthur Vicars himself, were Mr. Horlock, his clerk, and Miss Gibbon, the typist, both of whom based their refusal on the ground of the supposed interest of Sir Arthur Vicars. We do not think that the administration of an oath would have affected the results of an Inquiry in which there was little conflict of evidence as to the details, and in which all the salient and essential facts were agreed upon by everybody interested.

21. When much evidence had been given before us which seemed to us to show great want of due care and vigilance on Sir Arthur Vicars' part in the custody of the lost Jewels, we thought it only fair to give him another opportunity of appearing before us and telling his own story in person. (*See correspondence with Sir Arthur Vicars—Appendix D*). On the application of the Solicitor-General we agreed to take his evidence and that of any witnesses he might suggest, in public, if he so desired. Sir Arthur Vicars refused this offer, and we have not had the advantage of hearing from himself directly his account of the various matters and occurrences in which he was concerned. In these circumstances it is a great satisfaction to us to be able to say that, having carefully examined and considered every statement which Sir Arthur Vicars has made either in writing or orally relating to the subject of our Inquiry, we cannot find any conflict between him and the witnesses examined before us as to any matter of fact relevant to our Inquiry.

22. Although it was no part of our duty under Your Excellency's Warrant to conduct a criminal investigation into the robbery of the Jewels, or to take evidence with a view to the ascertainment of the thief, yet as, on the evidence given before us and now in print, it appears that the name of Mr. Francis Richard Shackleton was more than once named as that of the probable or possible author of this great crime, we think it only due to that gentleman to say that he came from San Remo at great inconvenience to give evidence before us, that he appeared to us to be a perfectly truthful and candid witness, and that there was no evidence whatever before us which would support the suggestion that he was the person who stole the Jewels.

23. Having fully investigated all the circumstances connected with the loss of the Regalia of the Order of St. Patrick, and having examined and considered carefully the arrangements of the Office of Arms in which the Regalia were deposited, and the provisions made by Sir Arthur Vicars, or under his direction, for their safe keeping, and having regard especially to the inactivity of Sir Arthur Vicars on the occasions immediately preceding the disappearance of the Jewels, when he knew that the Office and the Strong Room had been opened at night by unauthorised persons, we feel bound to report to Your Excellency that, in our opinion, Sir Arthur Vicars did not exercise due vigilance or proper care as the custodian of the Regalia.

We desire to express our obligations to our Secretary, Mr. C. T. Beard, of the Chief Secretary's Office, for the valuable assistance he gave us in the conduct of our Inquiry.

All which we humbly submit for Your Excellency's consideration.

JAMES J. SHAW.

ROBERT F. STARKIE.

CHESTER JONES.

C. T. BEARD,

Secretary.

25th January, 1908.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

(DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN THE EVIDENCE OF MR. HARRIS, SERGEANT
SHERKIN, AND SERGEANT MURPHY.)

STATEMENT OF SIR ARTHUR VICARS.

I am in charge of the Office of Arms, Dublin Castle. The jewels were last cleaned about the end of January, 1907, in the Strong Room, the grill being locked during the time they were cleaning them. They were cleaned by two men from West's, College-green, and were carefully examined by me, and I took possession of them from the men.

The jewels were last worn by His Excellency on 15th March, 1907, after which I brought them back and placed them in the safe in the library.

About the end of March last, Mr. Berthoud asked me if I had any objection to show the jewels to Mrs. Turlington and her daughter, of Killybeggy, who are cousins of his. I showed the diamonds to Mrs. Turlington and her daughter and a lady friend of theirs. I might have shown the diamonds to another lady friend between March and 11th June.

On 11th June I showed the diamonds to Mr. J. G. Hodgson, B.A., Librarian to the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle, along with one collar. From 11th June to 8th July I have no recollection of seeing the jewels, nor of having gone to the safe. The gold collars were last worn at the investiture of the Earl of Mountrath on 14th April, 1903.

The case which contained Lord Ormonde's and Lord Howth's collars were not inspected since April, 1903, but Lord Mayo's and Lord Enniskillen's were certainly inspected by me within this year.

On 17th June I wrote to Lady de Ros asking to forward the collar of her late husband to me, stating that if she had it at her address that she could forward it by Parcel Post, registered, or if in London that it might be sent to West & Son, College-green. The collar was sent from Gerrard & Co. to West on 24th June, and West acknowledged the receipt of collar, and I then wrote instructing them to have Lord de Ros's name and date of investiture engraved on it. I did not hear any more about one collar until I found it on my table in the office about 11 o'clock, a.m., on 8th July, 1907.

About 2.30, p.m., on 8th July, I gave the collar and a bunch of keys to Stacey, the Messenger, to carry down the collar to the safe. I pointed out the key of the safe to Stacey, and this is the only occasion I ever gave it to him. I followed him down about a minute afterwards, and found him at the safe with the door still closed. Stacey informed me that the safe was unlocked, because he could not get the key into the proper slot.

I said "Impossible"—knowing well the great precautions I always took when locking the safe. I then opened the safe, which was unlocked, the handle being turned down, which would represent to outside observation that the safe was locked.

I removed the case which always contained the Crown diamonds, and my worst fears were aroused by the lightness of the case, and the fact that the key was in the lock, which was never so left by me. On opening the case, I found the diamond stay and badge had been removed, but the badge ribbon and clasp were placed in the centre, having been removed from the badge. This could not be done hurriedly, as it involved unscrewing a screw and coining the ribbon off the hook.

On further examination, I found the collars of Lord Mayo, Lord Enniskillen, Lord Ormonde, and Lord Howth missing from the case, and the late Lord Cork's collar and enamelled badge gone from its deal box, which only contained the tissue paper in which it had been wrapped.

The small box containing my mother's jewels as described was also gone, and the only thing left was my patent under which I hold office.

The box which contained my mother's jewels was locked, and my brother, Mr. G. Mahony, had the key. I remained at the safe, and sent my messenger to the

Commissioners of Police to ask one of them to come at once; also to inform the Detective Department.

So far as I know there are only two keys for the safe, which are always in my custody, except in 1902, when I sent one from London to the Chief Secretary's pouch to the Under Secretary to give to Mr. Blake to bring the jewels to London, where they were required by His Excellency. Mr. Blake returned me the key in London, having had it only one day in his possession.

The key of the safe which I use I always carry with me along with other keys on a steel ring, except on full dress nights, when I remove it from the bunch and carry it on a ring of its own in my uniform coat pocket; the other key for safe I have always kept concealed in my residence.

I have never left the safe keys in my office or other place where any person could get possession of them.

There are four keys for Strong Room—one kept by myself, one by the messenger, one by Mr. Mahony, and one by Mr. Berthoud, which latter, for the past year, has been kept concealed in the Strong Room.

My key of the Strong Room I always carry on my watch chain, which is placed under my pillow at night. I recollect leaving the key of the safe in my writing table at my residence about two months ago, but the keys, with safe key included, were brought to me to my office by my servant, Frederick Pitt, within an hour. The keys were found by my maid-servant in my writing desk, and she directed Pitt to bring them to the Castle to me.

Elizabeth Darcy is the servant. Frederick Pitt, 17 years, is the male servant. His father is coachman with Rev. Alfred Wellington Ingram, of Enville Rectory, Sturbridge.

Mr. McNamara, junior, of Roskilly House, Dunboyne, stayed in my house for one night, 2nd July.

A man named Riley Walker, 16 years of age, stayed at my house for a fortnight in April last, and is at present errand with Sir Richard Barrow, Kildare. He came to my house to learn his duties as footman under my footman, Frederick Pitt.

Walker never visited the Office of Arms, nor had he any knowledge of the keys of the safe.

Arthur Phillips, my coachman, has a wife and four children, and resides in Clonsilla-terrace. He is seven years in my employment. He had access to my keys about eleven months ago, and occasionally visited the Library in the Office of Arms. He frequently saw the jewel case with me, and often saw me go into the Office of Arms with the case.

The office staff are Mr. Shackleton, Dublin Herald; Mr. Mahony, Cork Herald; Mr. Bennett Goldney, Athlone (the Mayor of Canterbury); Mr. Berthoud, Mr. Horlock, Miss Gibson, Mr. Stacey, and Mrs. Farrell and her son James, coal carrier.

Mr. Berthoud is in my employment since I took up office; Mr. Horlock is in my employment since January last. I engaged him in London, and got a high character of him from his clergy. It was through an advertisement in one of the papers (London paper) I got acquainted with him. When he came to Dublin he stayed for a short time in my house until he got lodgings. He gave me his address as 13, Railway Approach, Lt. Edmonson, London.

On Wednesday, 8th July, to the best of my recollection, I arrived at the office at 12 o'clock, noon, and left about 6 p.m. Stacey informed me that he was told by Mrs. Farrell, the office cleaner, that she found the hall door open when she arrived to clean the office in the morning.

On Friday, 5th July, I left the office at 7.15, p.m. About 6.45, p.m., Stacey asked me whether he could go, and I said "Yes." He asked me whether he should lock the Strong Room, and I told him to do

so, at the same time banding him a M.S. to be replaced therein. I subsequently had occasion to pass the Strong Room door to go to the telephone, more than once, and the door was closed.

At 7.10 p.m. I was leaving the office with Horlock, and in the hall said to him in a joking way, "Wait a minute till I make my usual tour of inspection." I then passed through the Library, glancing at all the bookcases, and satisfied myself they were closed. I passed into the messenger's room, noticed the window was bolted, and tried the handle of the Strong Room door, and found the door was locked. I then passed into the hall and joined Horlock. As we were going out of the door I met a press reporter, who gave me some information which necessitated my telephoning to the Vice-regal Lodge. I parted from Horlock and the messenger (having previously closed the office door and assured myself that it was locked), and went to the telephone in the Chief Secretary's office, and subsequently went home. On Saturday, 6th July, I arrived at the office at about 11 a.m. I have a vague recollection of being told by Stivey that Mrs. Farrell had found the Strong Room door open when she arrived, but at the time I did not realise that it was that morning, and being very busy left the matter for subsequent investigation.

It was not until Sunday afternoon, when I was working at my house in connection with the Royal Visit with Horlock, that I realised that the Strong Room door was open on Saturday morning. I said to Horlock that I must ask Stivey this point in the morning.

Horlock had informed me at my house on Sunday that Stivey had told me in my office on Saturday that the Strong Room door was found open that morning.

SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT OF SIR ARTHUR VICARS, ULSTER.

Referring to my statement of 12th July, 1907, for the last few years it was my custom on occasions of full dress nights, when the jewels were worn, to detach my safe key from my private bunch at my residence and put it in the tail pocket of my tunic. The bunch I then left in my uniform overcoat pocket, and also the office door key loose.

Since Mr. Narance left the Castle I have always hung my uniform overcoat behind the door of His Excellency's Private Secretary's room. Prior to that I always left my uniform overcoat hanging in Mr. Narance's room. I thought I had made this clear when reporting the matter to the police on 6th July. The key of the strong room door, on three nights, I always left on my watch chain, with any money, etc., in my dressing-table drawer, duly locked, the key of which was on my bunch.

When making my usual tour of inspection every evening I do not try if the presses are locked. I merely walk through the rooms to see that the presses with spring locks are closed to, but I never try the safe door handle, as I always test it when looking it, and I seldom have occasion to open it. I always, however, look at the window-holts, especially in Mr. Burtchell's room, and Mr. Stivey and I never fail to try the strong room handle.

I can assign no reason for giving Stivey the safe key on the 6th July, beyond the fact that I was for the moment engaged with a letter, and the cutter had

There was nothing missing from the Strong Room, although these gold collars and badges were exposed in a plate glass press, locked with four locks, besides two State Masons, the Sword of State, a jewelled sceptre, a Crown, and two massive silver spurs. There was a gold collar elsewhere in the Strong Room.

I do not suggest any single one of my staff had anything to do with it, nor do I suspect my maid-servant or footman, nor any person who slept in my house.

My theory is that some person got wax impressions of the keys, a few seconds would suffice to do this. Having regard to the great precautions taken by me in the custody of these keys, I cannot entertain the idea that the actual key of the safe was utilised by the thieves.

(Signed), ARTHUR VICARS, Ulster,

12th July, 1907.

I went to London about 25th December, 1905, and returned to Dublin on 7th January, 1907, during which time Mr. Burtchell and Mr. Mahony were in charge, but I had my safe key with me.

I was away from 25th January, at Nass, and Mr. Mahony was in charge in office. On 30th and 31st March I was absent at Palmerstown, and Mr. Mahony was in charge.

The office was closed from Good Friday, 20th March, to 2nd April, also on 4th May, and from Wed. Monday to Wed. Tuesday, when I was at Ballyfin, the residence of Sir Algernon Cooper.

(Initialed), A. V., (Gr.

case I wished him to carry down. At any rate, I followed Stivey down, and when I entered the library Stivey had not even opened the safe. My recollection is that he was in a stooped position at it, having just ascertained that the safe was unlocked.

The keys in the key box only had reference to book-cases and drawers with papers. It also contained the duplicate key of the grill (which when the strong room was locked, as the grill was only locked in the daytime).

I have a key for the key box; Mr. Horlock has another; and I believe that Mr. Burtchell has the third.

The spare key of the strong room is kept concealed in one of the drawers at the very back, wrapped in paper. This is the key that Mr. Burtchell gave up some time ago.

I and Stivey used to lock up the place and leave together up to Xmas, 1905. Since that time I have generally let him off at 5.30 p.m., on account of having Mr. Horlock in the office with me to do anything that was required.

Stivey and I were the only persons, so far as I know, who knew that the spare key of the strong room was concealed in the drawer there.

(Signed), ARTHUR VICARS, Ulster,

18th July, 1907.

APPENDIX B.

EXTRACTS from the STATUTES of the ORDER of ST. PATRICK passed under the Royal Sign Manual on 29th July, 1905.

XII. And it is ordained that, in pursuance of the Royal Ordinance of Our Royal Prodecessor, King William the Fourth, bearing date the seventh day of March, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-one, the jewelled insignia of the Grand Master made by Command of His said late Majesty for the use of the Grand Master of the said Most Illustrious Order, of which a description and representation is herewith

annexed, and which are Crown Jewels, shall be handed over by each Lord Lieutenant General and General Governor of Ireland, Grand Master of the said Most Illustrious Order, to his successor at such time as the Sword of State is delivered over, and shall be deposited by Our Ulster King of Arms in the Chancery of the Order along with the other insignia of the Order.

XIX. It is ordained that on the decease of each and every Knight Companion of this Most Illustrious Order, the heirs, executors and administrators of all such Knights Companions shall, within three months after the decease of any such Knight, deliver the before-mentioned Collars and Badges to the Sovereign or the Grand Master, for the service of the Order. And Ulster King of Arms, or his Deputy, shall have full power in the name of the Grand Master to apply to the heirs, executors or administrators of such deceased Knights for the Collars and Badges aforesaid.

* * * * *

XX. And it is further ordained that the said Collars and Badges shall be deposited for safe keeping in a steel safe in the strong room in the Chancery of the Order in the Office of Arms in Ireland until they be disposed of by the Grand Master. And when the said Badges or Collars are delivered to any

Knight by order of the Grand Master, he shall give a receipt for the same to Ulster King of Arms, or to his Deputy, as hereinafter set out:—

(Here follows form of receipt.)

* * * * *

XXVII. It is ordained that Our Ulster King of Arms for the time being shall be the King of Arms, Knight Attendant on the Order, and shall have the custody of the Seal and of the Archives of the Order and the jewelled Insignia of the Grand Master. He shall attend to the service of the Order generally, and shall obey and execute such commands and directions as he may receive from the Sovereign or the Grand Master relating to the same.

* * * * *

XXXVII. We are further pleased to ordain that the Chancery of the said Most Illustrious Order, wherein a record of all proceedings connected therewith shall be carefully deposited and preserved, shall be in the Office of Arms in Our Castle of Dublin.

* * * * *

APPENDIX C.

DOCUMENTS referred to in the evidence of Sir GEORGE HOLMES, Chairman of the Board of Works, and Mr. A. ROBINSON, Assistant Principal Surveyor to the Board.

REMOVED TOWER.

Safe.

2167/93.

MR. COULMAN,—

I saw Mr. Vicars this morning, and he pointed out to me where the jewels had been kept during Sir B. Burke's time. It was an iron box placed in a recess in the wall enclosed by a pair of wooden doors. The box is very old, and neither thief nor fire-proof. The jewels have been removed to Sir W. Kaye's custody for safety. What Mr. Vicars requires is a good safe (with two drawers), both fire and thief proof, costing about £15; this would have to be ordered from the makers, but if the Board should decide on supplying the safe, one could be lent until the makers had the one required delivered.

(Signed), W. HURAND,

5th Feb., '98

MR. COULMAN,—

I sent Mr. Vicars a safe, 30" x 24" x 24" on loan, but he now informs me that he finds he requires one as large again, as he considers it important that the collars, &c., of the Knights of St. Patrick should be kept in a safe. The cost would be about £30, so I submit this for instructions.

(Signed), W. HURAND,

11th February, '98.

MR. PRESTLAND,—

The extra-sized safe has been ordered as you instructed, and the General Vote on State of Official Residences will cover the expenditure.

(Initd.), H. C.,

13/3/93.

CHAIRMAN,—

February 25th,

Approved,

(Initd.), R. H. S.,

27/2/93.

Ordered,

(Initd.), W. H.

Noted,

(Initd.), H. C.,

28/2/93.

DUBLIN CASTLE—FISHERIES BUILDING.

2162/93.

Office for Ulster King of Arms.

MR. MELLOR,—

I conferred with Sir A. Vane on 10th instant. He stated that His Excellency having recognised the undesirability of allocating him only part of a building, as was proposed in the case of the Under-Secretary's house, had consented to Ulster having the whole of Fisheries building for his office. Ulster will not object, however, to giving back the adjoining top room to the main guard if doorway be closed up.

The alterations required are as follows, viz. :—

1. Remove partition between front and back rooms to form large public office. (This will necessitate re-papering and painting.)
2. Re-open old doorway to back room.
3. Build strong room, with 14 inch brick walls, and supply a Milner's door, steel safe, and iron shutters and shelving. (I have prepared a tracing showing the proposed arrangement, and intend the ceiling and floor to be comprised of Firebrick's fireproof flooring.)
4. Form space for Messengers, as shown.
5. Paper and paint room for Ulster on first floor. (He is willing if necessary to bear the expense of this item.)
6. Concrete the basement where now flagged.
7. Supply additional furniture for the offices—(matter for Furniture Clerk).

I estimate the cost of the foregoing items numbered 1 to 6 inclusive as £380.

W. M. P.,

13/5/92.

The report and plan have been prepared in accordance with verbal instructions which I received from the Chairman. I agree with the substance of it, which was discussed with me by Mr. Paton.

T. MELLOR,

18/5/92.

OFFICE OF ARMS,

DUBLIN CASTLE,

25th April, 1903.

DEAR MR. HENNER,—According to your suggestion I send you this line to remind you of your kind promise to have inquiry made towards expediting the preparations in my new office.

We cannot move until the book-cases are ready, and I think Mr. Coghlan wanted to put extra carpenters on them.

There is no furniture in the place (which is empty), and what is not available in our present offices will have to be supplied.

There are three rooms in our present offices as against eight in this new building.

The more urgent requirements now are, besides the book-cases and furniture:—

1. Some wooden upright dividers to shelves in printing room.
2. Glazed press therein for insignia, etc. (I would like one from the Museum if possible).
3. Light reflectors for some windows at the back.
4. Gas fittings seen to (a few points of which Mr. Pentland knows).
5. Existing safe for Crown Jewels to be exchanged for a narrower one to fit through door of strong room. Not more than 2 feet wide.

Mr. Pentland and Mr. Coghlan know all this and I imagine it only requires a word from you to set things going and to expedite matters.

Mr. Pentland will have it that apparently no provision for furniture, etc., was made for new offices in the Estimates, and I gathered I shall have to wait until 1904, but I hope and trust he is mistaken in this and must be thinking of the building alterations' estimate which is exhausted.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) ARTHUR VICARS, Ulster.

16472/03.

4th November, 1903.

Sir,—

In accordance with your communication of 1st September last, I now beg to enclose particulars of supplies required in this Department for the coming year.

As the Board are doubtless aware, we are about to transfer to new offices in the Upper Castle Yard, which are much larger than our present offices and consequently require more furniture.

This, coupled with the fact that no particulars for estimates whatever for furniture and supplies have been sent in from this office for 1901-2 or 1902-3, is the reason for our present requirements being so extensive.

I would mention that in making out the list I have taken into account all the existing furniture, etc., in the present offices that will be available for the new offices, and therefore what is included on the list is additional to what we already have.

I regret not being able to furnish list sooner as I have been absent from Ireland, and the list entitled careful consideration.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) ARTHUR VICARS, Ulster.

The Secretary,
Board of Works.

17066/03.

19th November, 1903.

Sir,—

Referring to my letter of the 4th instant. There were a few items I omitted from the Schedules, the necessity for which I could not foresee till I had transferred to the new offices, and I would ask you to be so good as to add them to those already sent in.

There are a few articles which are much required, such as fenders, guards, presses for notepaper and printed forms, tables, which I was led to believe would be supplied immediately we transferred, but

nothing has been done as yet and we are greatly hampered in consequence. Would you, therefore, be so good as to ask the Board to have these more important details seen to.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) ARTHUR VICARS, Ulster.

The Secretary,
Board of Works.

EXTRACT FROM SCHEDULE SENT IN BY
MR ARTHUR VICARS.

ANNUAL ESTIMATE, 1904-1905.

Department—Office of Arms, Dublin Castle.

1. Burglar (not fireproof) Milner Safe for Crown Jewels and Insignia Order of St. Patrick.
Outside measure 48" x 24" x 22", with three moveable shelves (No. 20,014, Milner's Estimate); present safe, which will not fit into strong room, to be returned.

FURNITURE ORDER'S REPORT ON ITEM 1 IN MR A.
VICARS' DEMAND IN THE 1904-05 ESTIMATE
SCHEDULES.

There is a very large live and burglar-proof safe in this office, supplied some time ago for this purpose, and if Mr A. Vicars required to have it in strong room he should have given the Board some intimation of it when the door of strong room was being ordered. There is a sentry night and day on duty outside the office where this safe is, and under the circumstances I do not think a new one should be supplied. It might be a very long time before such a safe as the old one would be required. Press supplied. Ledges said to be required for office work ordered.

COPY OF MINUTE OF CHAIRMAN OF BOARD OF WORKS
ON ESTIMATE SCHEDULES, 1904-05.

I have had a conference with Ulster, who states that in view of the fact that there is always a sentry outside, the present burglar-proof safe can be used by him till such time as we can find another one for it.

On the other hand, he represents that the trolley is very desirable to prevent damage to books and MSS.

The item for a new safe may be cancelled and the trolley allowed.

The set of drawers—44—must be postponed. It may be brought up for consideration with next year's estimate.

G. H.,

22/12/03.

18th July, 1907.

DEAR SIR GEORGE,—It would be a hasty conclusion to arrive at were I to attribute the loss of the jewels to the inaction of the Board of Public Works, though I think it probable that if my representations and requirements had been carried out originally that this burglary could not have occurred.

What I originally intended doing was to place my existing safe inside the strong room as additional security, and I would have kept its key in the strong room in a place that I only knew.

I remember (and my letters bear it out) particularly asking for a Bramah lock, of which it is impossible to take wax impressions—it is, to my mind, the best and most secure of any lock, and that used by the King and State Officials for Despatches and State Papers.

It was not until the strong room was nearly built, and the door fixed, that I then discovered the door was not wide enough to admit the safe, although I had all along pointed out that I wanted the safe to be placed inside.

None of us here have the least recollection of Mr. Robinson or anyone else offering to put the present safe through the window, and my impression is that the boys were affixed to the window by them.

I urged that a smaller burglar (not fireproof) safe should be supplied in exchange for the one we had, which I also requisitioned for in Estimates, 1902-3, but I was informed that the difficulty of expense arose, and I was told (and you yourself in private conversation also said) that a smaller safe would be supplied later that could enter the strong room when another Department required a safe and could have ours. This, however, was never done.

I cannot complain against you personally, for I have always received help and reasonable consideration at your hands, and anything of importance that has been sanctioned by the Board for my office I have always felt has been largely due to your influence as recognising the reasonableness of my requests.

At the same time I have always felt that the Board did not fully realise the great responsibility I had and were inclined to think that I exaggerated the value of the jewels entrusted to my care. We now know whether I was exaggerating or not!

I cannot say that I considered it likely that a robbery of the sort could be perpetrated with policemen on duty just outside the office and a sentry pacing up and down night and day and a detective seeking a round of the office every night to be assured that all was safe.

In reference to the latter part of your letter,* I mentioned on Monday to Mr. Robinson that I wondered whether the safe was supplied from some other office, as my recollection was that in 1883 the two boys were handed to me by Moore and not delivered to me by registered post, as in the case of the strong room door. I did not say categorically that the safe was an old one, and certainly not that copies were made of the keys before delivered to me, but asked him whether such could have been possible.

As regards the abstraction of the jewels, it is an absolute mystery to me, for I took the greatest precautions that any human being could take and the key of safe never left my possession, and the strong room key, when not on my watch chain in my possession, was always locked up in a drawer until I returned from the Castle at night, although I always took the safe key with me, and as a proof of the confidence I imposed in my own precautions I entrusted our own family jewels to the same repository. What greater proof could be adduced?

I enclose copies of two or three letters I have found bearing on the subject, which illustrates my anxiety at the time.

I hope the Treasury will institute an inquiry, so that I shall be enabled to demonstrate that I took every possible care to discharge my very responsibilities, which it was unfair to place on the shoulders of one individual.

Lord Cresswell, Lord Cadogan, Lord Dudley and His Excellency will, I feel sure, support me in bearing testimony to the great care and precautions I exercised in the careful discharge of this very responsible duty, which I had unwillingly to undertake, and I am prepared to leave the result to the public testimony with complete confidence.

I cannot feel that I have been fairly treated in the matter by the Board of Works, as the question of money always was raised as an obstacle, however willing the Board may have been, and when one considers that the amount involved could not have exceeded £20, and the old safe handed over as a set-off, it would seem unreasonable that the matter should have been postponed until some other Department required a safe.

You yourself and others of your Department assured me more than once of the absolute security of the safe, and I was led to think that this was so, otherwise I would hardly have entrusted our own family jewels to it.

It was the only office or house in the Castle in which any great value was stored, and yet there was no one resident in the building. I made several efforts to alter this, and was backed up by Lord Cadogan, but the Treasury refused to sanction any such proposals, although I think you personally recommended the idea.

I find that on 1st October, 1903, I wrote to the Board asking for a fire and burglar-proof door for strong room. "Brannish (Needs & Co.) lock preferred, if no objection."

In the requisitions for Annual Estimate for 1903-4 appears as the first item, "Burglar (not fireproof) Milner safe for Crown Jewels and Insignia of the Order of St. Patrick. Outside measure, 48" x 24" x 22", with three movable shelves (No. 20034 Milner's estimate). Patent safe, which will not fit into strong room, to be returned."

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) ARTHUR VICARS, Under-Secretary.

Sir George C. V. Holmes, K.C.V.O., C.B.,
Office of Works,
Upper Merrion-street, Dublin.

SIR A. VICARS' LETTER OF 1st OCTOBER,
1902, QUOTED IN FOREGOING LETTER.—
1193/02.

1303/07.

OFFICE OF ARMS,

DUBLIN CASTLE,

1st October, 1902.

SIR.—In reference to the fitting up of the Old Fisheries buildings as new offices for this Department. I regret that I was absent in London for the Commission when an official from the Board of Works called here to ascertain particulars as to my requirements.

As the new strong room is in course of being constructed I will be much obliged if someone could call here in reference thereto, and also as to one or two other structural alterations.

I may specify them shortly as follows:—

1. The removal of the lath and plaster partition between two rooms on ground floor, so as to make one large general office.
2. The opening out of blocked-up door from this general office towards strong room.
3. Iron shutters, both outside and in, to the incumbered casement window of strong room, to prevent draught in case of fire.
4. Lift from general office to first floor for folio volumes.
5. Fire and burglar-proof door for strong room large enough to admit trolley for books (Brannish (Needs & Co.) lock preferred, if no objection).
6. Adjustable corrugated iron shelving in strong room for MSS., etc.
7. I see that girders are being used for carrying the arches for the strong room, and I trust that they will be cased on top with concrete bricks and be strong enough to resist any falling walls or roofs. It is of the utmost importance that the strong room shall be absolutely fireproof, for if the records here were burned it would be a National loss.
8. I think it would be desirable that the new side walls of strong room should have an inner lining 12 inches thick of bricks, with space between, joined by courses of headers at intervals.
9. I have always understood, too, that to be thoroughly fireproof the walls should be built of fire-brick laid in mortar of finely ground fire-clay mixed with silicate of soda.
10. I presume the question of book-case accommodation and internal fittings can be dealt with later when the structural alterations are completed.

I am,

Your obedient servant

(Signed) ARTHUR VICARS, Under-Secretary.

The Secretary.

Board of Works.

* This letter is not forthcoming.

THE TWO FOLLOWING COPIES OF LETTERS
WERE FORWARDED TO SIR GEORGE
HOLMES WITH SIR ARTHUR VICARS'
LETTER OF 13th JULY, 1907.

*Copy Extract from letter, Sir Arthur Vicars, K.C.V.O.,
Ulster King of Arms, to H. Coghlan, Esq., Board
of Works.*

10th May, 1908.

DEAR MR. COGHLAN,

As regards the safe; I originally proposed to put the one I have into the messenger's room outside strong room. You said this would be risky, as anyone might come in at the back window, and said, "We will give you another of sufficient size to go into strong room in exchange for present one." Besides messenger's room was found to be too small, you now suggest a safe that is not burglar-proof—I certainly won't undertake the custody of the Crown Jewels without a burglar-proof safe.

I do not like safe being in the public office for various reasons, besides it would be inconvenient for me.

You say the money is nearly consumed—for two years I have sent in no estimate, but warned the Board of this coming expense, and apparently it has had no effect, and that due provision has not been made—this is not my fault.

Will the Board take any responsibility over the custody of the Crown Jewels which I am empowered by Royal Warrant to do, to obtain a safe deposit for, however this is strictly a matter personal to the Lord Lieutenant and not rightly chargeable to my office.

I sent in last February a list of things that would be required. I am now sending in a formal requisition of all articles required that have not been supplied, and that my present office cannot supply.

The chief questions on which we are at variance are the safe and the staining of inside of shelves.

You have not sent me the promised catalogue of safes.

Yours very truly,

(Signed), ARTHUR VICARS, Ulster.

H. Coghlan, Esq.,
Board of Works.

*Copy Extract of letter to Mr. Coghlan, from Sir
Arthur Vicars, K.C.V.O., Ulster King of Arms.*

4th June, 1908.

DEAR MR. COGHLAN,

As regards the safe, you asked me whether a fire- and only safe would suffice, and I said no, but a burglar-proof one without fire resisting chambers would meet the case.

I have ascertained that one of Milner's plate safes, burglar resisting (without fire resisting chambers), with shelves inside, measuring outside, 46 inches high, 34 inches wide, and 23 inches deep, and inside 44 inches by 29 inches by 18 inches, would cost only £23.

Will this get over all the difficulty as regards the safe?

Yours very truly,

(Signed), ARTHUR VICARS, Ulster.

H. Coghlan, Esq.,
Board of Works.

Board of Works,

Dublin, July 17th, 1907.

DEAR SIR ARTHUR,—

With reference to your letter of the 13th inst., as statements have been made in the Press purporting to come from yourself and from an official of your Department, I have come to the conclusion that I will not reply by letter to the statements contained in your communication to me, but will reserve what I have to say till the inquiry into the circumstances attending the loss of the jewels is held.

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

(Signed), GEORGE C. V. HENNESSY.

Sir Arthur Vicars, K.C.V.O.,
Ulster King of Arms,
The Castle, Dublin.

Ratner Safe Works,

Bromley-by-Bow, E.,

22 July, 1907.

(Confidential.)

A. Robinson, Esq.,
Board of Works,
Dublin.

DEAR SIR,—

We are in receipt of your favour of the 20th inst., and in reply beg to say that we cannot trace a Ratner safe, No. 2335, being supplied for the use of the Board.

We find, however, that in April, 1903, Safe No. 2245 was supplied to A. Vicars, Esq., Dublin Castle, through Messrs. Hodges and Son, and the keys of this safe were sent from here by registered post direct to Mr. Vicars on the 13th April, 1903.

We have searched all the records that we have, but cannot trace having made a duplicate key for this safe since it was supplied, and think it extremely improbable that we should have done so. Of course, anyone requiring such a key for an improper use would certainly not come to us.

We shall be pleased to give any further particulars we can, and are,

Sir,

Yours obedient servants,
(Signed), RAYNER SAFE CO., LTD.

Milner's Safe Co., Ltd.,
Milner's Buildings,

28, Finsbury Pavement,

London, E.C.,

Aug. 18, 1907.

Andrew Robinson, Esq.,

Office of Public Works,
Dublin.

DEAR SIR,—

Referring to your favour of the 20th and 24th of July, we have searched through our books, and find that two extra keys (No. 233409) were supplied to Sir Arthur Vicars in accordance with his order of the 27th of May, 1903, and we have his acknowledgment of the keys dated May 30th, 1903.

Trusting this information will be useful to you,

We are,

Yours faithfully,

Per Pro.

Milner's Safe Co., Ltd.,

(Signed), J. J. FRARY,

Managing Director.

APPENDIX D.

CORRESPONDENCE between the COMMISSIONERS and SIR ARTHUR VICARS.

I.

Dublin Castle,
7th January, 1908.*Commission of Inquiry, Office of Arms.*

GENTLEMEN,—

The Assistant Under-Secretary has handed to me your letter of this date, which I will place before the Commissioners at the first opportunity. In the meantime, however, I may say that I have reason to know that it is the desire of the Commissioners to proceed with the inquiry without delay.

The Commissioners are:—His Honour Judge Shaw; R. F. Starkie, Esq., B.M.; and Chester Jones, Esq., one of the Metropolitan Police Magistrates of London.

I am,
Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,
C. T. BEARD,
Secretary.

Messrs. W. R. Meredith and Son,
Solicitors,
32, Molesworth-street, Dublin.

III.

Dublin Castle,
7th January, 1908.

SIR,—

With reference to the Commission of Inquiry which has been appointed to investigate the circumstances of the loss of the Regalia of the Order of St. Patrick, I am directed by the Chairman to acquaint you that the first meeting of the Commission will be held at the Office of Arms, Dublin Castle, on Friday next, at 11 a.m., and to say that the Commissioners require your presence as a witness on that occasion.

I am,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
C. T. BEARD,
Secretary.

Sir Arthur E. Vicars, K.C.V.O.,
7, St. James's-terrace,
Clonsilla, Co. Dublin.

IV.

Dublin Castle,
8th January, 1908.*Commission of Inquiry, Office of Arms.*

SIR,—

In confirmation of my letter of yesterday, I am directed by the Chairman to inform you that it is the desire of the Commissioners to examine all persons who may be likely to throw any light upon the subject of the Inquiry, and the Commissioners will, therefore, be glad to procure the attendance of any person or persons whom you may suggest as being in a position to give evidence in the matter.

If you desire to suggest the names of any such persons I shall be glad to receive the names and addresses as soon as possible.

I am,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
C. T. BEARD,
Secretary.

Sir Arthur E. Vicars, K.C.V.O.,
7, St. James's-terrace,
Clonsilla, Co. Dublin.

II.

32, Molesworth-street,
Dublin, 7th January, 1908.*Commission of Inquiry, Office of Arms.*

DEAR SIR,—

We are obliged for yours of this day's date, and we will use our utmost exertions to have the briefs ready in time for counsel for Friday, but the time is very limited.

Yours faithfully,
W. R. MEREDITH AND SON.

C. T. Beard, Esq.,
Chief Secretary's Office,
Dublin Castle.

V.

32, Molesworth-street,
Dublin, 7th January, 1908.*Commission of Inquiry, Office of Arms.*

DEAR SIR,—

Referring to your letter to us of the 7th instant, we think it better to let you know at once that we regret we will not be prepared to proceed with the Inquiry on Sir Arthur Vicars' behalf to-morrow.

We only got notice of the Inquiry on the 7th instant, and although we have worked since then both night and day, we find it will not be possible for us

[Copy of Letter referred to in above Letter.]

32, Molesworth-street,
Dublin, 7th January, 1908.*Re Vicars' Assets.*

DEAR SIR,—

Sir Arthur Vicars has handed us your letter of the 6th instant, and we note that the Commissioners will meet on Friday next, the 10th instant.

The time for preparation of the necessary briefs for counsel is very limited, but we presume the meeting on Friday will be merely to settle the form of procedure. Kindly let us know if that is so. Also please let us know the names of the Commissioners.

Yours faithfully,
W. R. MEREDITH AND SON.

Sir J. B. Dougherty,
Chief Secretary's Office,
Dublin Castle.]

to send out the briefs until late to-night or to-morrow morning. You must bear in mind that the appointment of the Commission took us completely by surprise. So far back as the 28th October last the Assistant Under-Secretary in a letter addressed to Sir Arthur Vicars distinctly notified that gentleman's request for an Inquiry, and subsequently both His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant and Mr. Birrell stated personally to our Mr. F. W. Meredith that a Commission would not, and could not, be granted; and consequently we had nothing prepared.

In addition to this, one of Sir Arthur Vicars' Counsel, the Right Hon. James Campbell, K.C., M.P., who has been advising our client throughout, is acting as umpire in a very important arbitration which will not conclude until to-morrow evening, and which he could not possibly leave; and his other Counsel, Mr. T. M. Healy, K.C., M.P., is in London. He is crossing to-night for the case, but, of course, he will not arrive before to-morrow morning, and he will require a reasonable interval to read his brief and make up the facts of the case before the Commission sits.

We have, therefore, no alternative but to apply for an adjournment of the Commission until Saturday morning. We deeply regret if this will cause the Commissioners any inconvenience, and we would ask you to be good enough to explain to them that it was absolutely impossible for us to be ready for to-morrow.

We may mention that we have not seen a copy of the Commission, and as it is essential that Sir Arthur Vicars' Counsel should know the scope of the Inquiry we would be obliged by your sending us a copy by bearer.

Sir Arthur Vicars has handed us your letter of the 5th instant, asking him to send a list of suggested witnesses. This is a matter upon which he must have the advice of Counsel when they discuss the scope of the Inquiry, and we are arranging for a consultation with Counsel at the earliest possible moment, namely, to-morrow morning, and we will then forward you such list as they may advise.

We think it would be better if you would communicate with us as representing Sir Arthur Vicars in future, as it only causes delay writing to him, as we have advised him not to reply to any letters or inquiries except through us.

Yours faithfully,

W. R. MEREDITH AND SON.

C. T. BEARD, Esq.,
Chief Secretary's Office,
Dublin Castle.

P.S.—We are instructing our Counsel to attend to-morrow morning before the Commissioners at 11 o'clock for the purpose of applying for an adjournment.—W. R. M. and Son.

VI.

Immediate.

Dublin Castle,

5th January, 1908.

Commission of Inquiry, Office of Arms.

GENTLEMEN,—

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this date, which I will place before the Commissioners for their consideration at the earliest possible moment.

I enclose, as requested, a copy of the Lord Lieutenant's Warrant constituting the Commission, and shall in future have much pleasure in communicating directly with you as representing Sir Arthur Vicars.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

C. T. BEARD,

Secretary.

Messrs. W. R. Meredith and Son,
Solicitors,
32, Mallesworth-street, Dublin.

VII.

(Delivered at 11.30 a.m.)

Dublin Castle,

14th January, 1908.

Commission of Inquiry, Office of Arms.

(Immediate.)

GENTLEMEN,—

I am directed by the Commission to inform you that they have heard much evidence which, in the absence of any explanation or answer on the part of Sir Arthur Vicars, seriously affects him in his office as possessor of the Crown jewels, and in respect of the care and vigilance with which he kept them.

The Commission desire most earnestly to give Sir Arthur Vicars every opportunity of explaining all the circumstances connected with his custody of the jewels, and trust that he will see fit to attend with his counsel and assist them with his evidence.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

C. T. BEARD,

Secretary.

Messrs. W. R. Meredith and Son,
Solicitors,

32, Mallesworth-street, Dublin.

VIII.

(Delivered at 2.0 p.m.)

Dublin Castle,

14th January, 1908.

Commission of Inquiry, Office of Arms.

(Immediate.)

GENTLEMEN,—

In reference to the letter sent to you this morning, I am directed by the Commission to state further that if Sir Arthur Vicars is ready to assist the Commission by his evidence, they have no objection, if he thinks it desirable, to take his evidence in public, together with the evidence of any other witnesses whom he may think it desirable to have examined.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

C. T. BEARD,

Secretary.

Messrs. W. R. Meredith and Son,

IX.

(Reply to No. VIII., received at 3.30 p.m.)

32, Mallesworth-street,

Dublin, 14th January, 1908.

Sir,—

We have placed your letter of to-day before our client, Sir Arthur Vicars, and are instructed by him to express his surprise that the Commissioners should have thought it necessary to write such a letter in face of his determination already deliberately expressed through his counsel not to take any part of any kind in those investigations, conducted as they are in secret, and by a tribunal unable even to compel the attendance of witnesses, or to place them under the obligation of an oath, or submit their statements to the test of cross-examination. The decision of the

Commissioners expressly announced that under the terms of their warrant they were absolutely precluded from the investigation of any matter which did not directly bear upon the question of the alleged negligence of Sir Arthur Vickers in the custody of the jewels, was in itself under the special and notorious circumstances of the case the simplest justification, in his opinion and that of his advisers, of his determination to take no part in such an inquiry. The statement in your letter to the effect that the Commissioners have already heard, much of what you erroneously describe as "evidence" which seriously affects Sir Arthur Vickers in his office as custodian of the jewels, confirms him in the wisdom of the advice given to him by his counsel, and emphasises the justice of his demand that in the public interest, as well as in the cause of fair play and truth, any inquiry of the kind must prove absolutely worthless and abortive, that does not investigate into all the circumstances of the case, in the light of day and before a tribunal unimpaired not merely to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents, but also to place the witnesses under the obligation of an oath. We must respectfully add that the course adopted by the Commissioners of persevering, at the dictation of the Government, in the investigation in the absence of Sir Arthur Vickers and his counsel, after the expression of their own deliberate conviction that any further prosecution of the inquiry would not, under the circumstances, effect any useful purpose, is not calculated to strengthen the belief of Sir Arthur Vickers in the independence of the Commission.

We have only further to express his conviction that in the light of what has already happened it must be now transparent that the time has arrived when all this secrecy and mystery should be abandoned and his reiterated request for a searching, public, and judicial inquiry acceded to.

We are,

Sir,

Your faithful servants,

W. R. MEADWORTH AND SON.

C. T. BEARD, Esq.,

X.

(Reply to No. 1111, received at 5.30 p.m.)

33, Molesworth-street,

Dublin, 14th January, 1908.

Sir,—

We have received the Commissioners' supplementary letter of to-day, and are instructed by Sir Arthur Vickers to state, in reply, that it should have been obvious to the Commissioners that their first suggestion could not affect or alter the existing position in the slightest degree. At their opening sitting the Commissioners were good enough to inform counsel who appeared for Sir Arthur Vickers that while they believed it was the intention that their inquiry should be held in private, they were themselves open to argument on the point. They were at once distinctly and emphatically informed by counsel that the objections of Sir Arthur Vickers were not limited to the matter of secrecy, but applied to the limited scope of the inquiry as defined by the Commissioners, and above all to the absence of any power either to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents or to administer an oath. May we add that while Sir Arthur Vickers does not desire in any way to question the bona fides of the Commissioners, he fears that a repetition of these attempts to entice him before them may expose their anxiety in this respect to possible misconstruction.

We are,

Sir,

Your faithful servants,

W. R. MEADWORTH AND SON.

C. T. BEARD, Esq.,